

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 CIAE-00

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FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2052

C O N F I D E N T I A L BUENOS AIRES 5045

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PINT, AR

SUBJ: CONVERSATION WITH ADMIRAL EMILIO MASSERA

1. A FEW HOURS BEFORE A SCHEDULED BLACK TIE DINNER WHICH I OFFERED ON JULY 24, 1975 IN HONOR OF ADMIRAL EMILIO MASSERA, COMMANDER

IN CHIEF OF THE ARGENTINE NAVY, EMBASSY NAVAL ATTACHE CAPTAIN RODGERS WAS CALLED TO NAVY HEADQUARTERS AND TOLD THAT ADMIRAL MASSERA WOULD WISH TO HAVE A PRIVATE 5-MINUTE TALK WITH ME WHILE AT MY RESIDENCE THAT EVENING. SUBJECT WAS DESCRIBED AS CONNECTED WITH "CREDITS". CAPTAIN RODGERS AND I INTERPRETED THIS COULD MEAN THE ADMIRAL WISHED TO DISCUSS THE PURCHASE OF NAVAL EQUIPMENT UNDER A CREDIT ARRANGEMENT.

2. DURING COCKTAILS THE ADMIRAL AND I, ACCOMPANIED BY MY DCM, MOVED TO AN ADJOINING ROOM AND TO MY SURPRISE THE ADMIRAL TOLD ME THAT THE ARMED FORCES OF ARGENTINA WERE DETERMINED TO BRING ABOUT THE RESIGNATION OF FOREIGN MINISTER VIGNES, AS A FOLLOW-UP OF THE REMOVAL FROM OFFICE OF LOPEZ REGA, RODRIGO AND LASTIRI. THE ADMIRAL EXPLAINED THAT VIGNES WAS PROTECTING HIS POSITION BY TELLING MRS. PERON THAT HE HAD FIRM COMMITMENTS FOR LOANS FROM THE UNITED STATES, AND THAT HIS REMOVAL AS FOREIGN MINISTER WOULD AUTOMATICALLY RESULT IN THE CANCELLATION OF THESE PROMISES. THE ADMIRAL REQUESTED THAT

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THE USG DISAVOW THESE ALLEGATIONS IF THEY WERE NOT TRUE.

3. I TOLD ADMIRAL MASSERA THAT THE USG HAD NOT GIVEN MINISTER VIGNES ANY ASSURANCES NOR MADE ANY COMMITMENTS TO HIM THAT COULD MAKE HIM BELIEVE THAT LOANS WOULD BE APPROVED. I FURTHER STATED THAT THE USG DEALS WITH THE ARGENTINE GOVERNMENT AND NOT IN ANY PERSONAL FASHION WITH INDIVIDUAL MINISTERS. THE ADMIRAL SEEMED SATISFIED TO HEAR THIS.

4. IN SUBSEQUENT CONVERSATION WITH THE DCM, ADMIRAL MASSERA SAID THAT HIS DEMARCHE TO THE AMBASSADOR WAS ON BEHALF OF THE COMMANDERS OF THE THREE ARMED SERVICES, ADDING THAT HE WAS THE PRIME MOVER AMONG THEM. THE AIR FORCE COMMANDER IN CHIEF HAD THE AIR FORCE SOLIDLY BEHIND HIM AS MASSERA HAD THE NAVY. WHILE ARMY COMMANDING GENERAL NUMA LAPLANE SHARED THE VIEWS OF THE OTHER TWO SERVICE CHIEFS, THE POSITION OF THE ARMY AS AN INSTITUTION WAS MORE DIVIDED.

5. ADMIRAL MASSERA STATED CATEGORICALLY THAT HE HAD NO POLITICAL AMBITIONS FOR HIMSELF AND, IN FACT, WAS PREPARED TO LOSE HIS JOB AS A RESULT OF HIS INVOLVEMENT IN THE CURRENT PROBLEMS.
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